
Status & Remarks

The application presently contains the following claims:

| <i>Independent Claim #s</i> | <i>Dependent Claim #s</i> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 4-12 |
| 13 | 14-19 |
| 20 | 21-29 |
| 30 | 31-38 |
| 39 (withdrawn) | 40-45 (withdrawn) |
| 46 | 47-54 |

Claims 39-45 are withdrawn in light of the provisional election made by the applicant's attorney on June 16, 2005 in a telephone conversation with the examiner. Claims 2-3 are deleted, the subject matter of which has been incorporated into independent claim #1. Claims 1, 4-7, 18 and 30 are amended for the purposes of clarification. Claims 46-54 are newly added. Support for the newly added claims can be found in originally submitted claims 30-38.

Claims 30-38 are allowable.

37 C.F.R. §1.83(a) Drawings

The examiner has objected to the drawings under this section in light of the limitation found in the claims regarding the "collar is narrower than the width of the tube" as indicated in claim #18. Through amendment, this objection is believed to have been overcome.

Claim Objections

The examiner has objected to claims 1 and 6 due to the following informalities:

- (1) the phrase "the central bore" lacked proper antecedent basis (claim #1); and

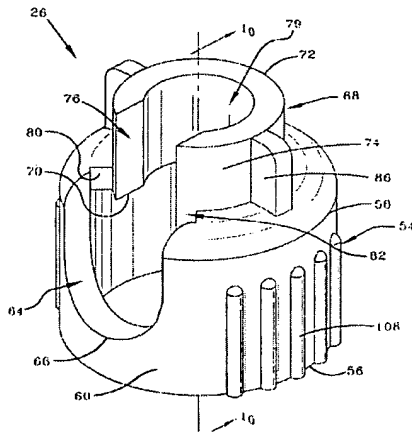
(2) the phrase "the aperture also lacked antecedent basis (claim #6).

Through amendment of the identified claims, the predicate for the above-identified objections has been removed.

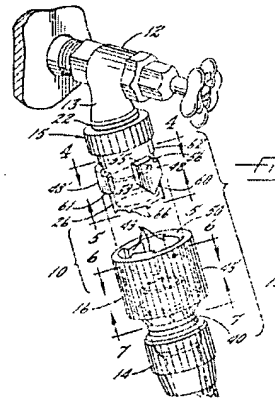
35 U.S.C. §102

The examiner has rejected claims 1-29 under this section, subparagraph (b) as being anticipated by Klieuver (U.S. Patent No. 4,477,109). The examiner has provided thoughtful reasons to support the rejection.

The applicant's attorney would respectfully request the examiner to revisit his initial conclusion in light of the following arguments as associated with claims 1-29. It must be stated that the applicant's attorney is unable to find any "gap" in either the collar wall or the base wall of Klieuver. By contrast, there is a clear gap in the collar wall as shown in Figs. 6 and 8-9 by reference 76 and a partial gap in the base wall as illustrated by reference 64.



Applicant's invention



Klieuver '109

Clearly, there are clearly no corresponding discontinuities in any of the walls of Klieuver. For the rejected claims, the ability to insert a sealing surface on the operation end of the tube through the identified gap 64 coupled with snap fit through the collar aperture is not present in Klieuver.

The applicant's attorney is not able to see any "base wall having a partial gap (within 16) disposed therein" nor any "collar wall having a gap (portion of 20 within 14)" which corresponds to the definitions of the same as written in the pending claims.

35 U.S.C. §103

There are no pending rejections under this section.

Request for Reconsideration

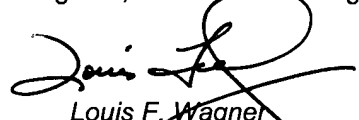
Applicant believes that all independent claims clearly define over the prior art and that the distinctions between the present invention and the prior art would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Additionally, the remaining dependent claims, by the limitations contained in the base independent claims, are felt to be patentable over the prior art by virtue of their dependency from independent claims which distinguish over the prior art of record. All pending claims are thought to be allowable and reconsideration by the Examiner is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that no new additional searching will be required by the examiner. A fee determination sheet is attached for this amendment response. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee required to affect the filing of this document to Account No. 50-0983.

It is respectfully submitted that all references identified by the examiner have been distinguished in a non-obvious way. If the examiner believes that a telephonic conversation would facilitate a resolution of any and/or all of the outstanding issues pending in this application, then such a call is cordially invited at the convenience of the examiner.

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Respectfully Submitted,
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